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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002536

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/31/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: DIYALA ) PROVINCIAL COUNCIL VOTES UNANIMOUSLY TO  
DISMISS POLICE DIRECTOR

Classified By: PolOff John G. Fox for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (U) This is a PRT Diyala reporting cable

12. (C) SUMMARY. Diyala,s Provincial Council has voted unanimously to dismiss Provincial Director of Police Ghanem al Quraishi. The immediate cause of the vote was al Quraishi,s decision on August 9 to reactivate his July 30 decision to drastically reduce or remove the personal security details assigned to top provincial officials. Governor Ra,ad, with whom al Quraishi has clashed repeatedly, voted along with all members of the Alliance (group of Shia parties), the Kurdish Coalition and the Iraqi Islamic Party. The Provincial Council is drafting an official document to transmit to Prime Minister Maliki later today (August 11). Governor Ra,ad, Deputy Governor Auwf, the Assistant Governors and the Provincial Council were particularly concerned that Staff Major General (SMG) al Quraishi,s maneuvering with their security details (which started just two days after the launch of Iraqi security operation &Benevolent Diyala8) had exposed them to the danger of terrorist attacks. In addition, they saw al Quraishi,s actions as designed to sideline Diyala,s political leaders and prevent them from being able to monitor the ongoing security operations. END SUMMARY.

13. (C) Diyala,s Provincial Council voted unanimously on August 11 to dismiss Provincial Director of Police Ghanem al Quraishi. Believing that al Quraishi survived previous removal efforts because of U.S. intervention, Provincial Council members have asked that Coalition Forces not intervene in support of him. One of Governor Ra,ad,s persistent themes in discussions with the PRT and CF during the past few months has been that al Quraishi must go. Ra,ad complained on many occasions that al Quraishi persistently acts as though he is in charge of Diyala and does not &respect civilian authority8 (this is a veiled reference to al Quraishi,s previous history as one of Saddam Hussein,s most feared Army Generals). Ra,ad told us that he has asked the Prime Minister to remove al Quraishi on several occasions but did not get much traction on the issue.

14. (C) Provincial Council Chairman Ibrahim Bajillan (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, PUK) told us in a conversation last week that al Quraishi is the most serious threat to security facing Diyala and should be removed immediately. He noted that in three other provinces, the Provincial Directors of Police were removed at the start of their province-wide security campaigns, so there are precedents that could cited in removing al Quraishi. Assistant Governor Emad Jaleel Abdullah (Kurdish Democratic Party, KDP) remarked to us on August 10 that all the parties represented in the Provincial Council agreed that al Quraishi should be removed at once.

15. (C) Bajillan and Emad told us that the substantial reduction in PSDs is particularly bad for them and other Kurdish officials who commute home to Khaniqin Qada on the weekends. They pass through the Hamreen area where Al Qaeda still has some sizable cells. They have been attacked a number of times there, including once about three months ago

when several of their security guards were killed size. During the discussion it was noted that the ongoing campaign to target Al Qaeda, other terrorists and criminals could be expected to increase the likelihood that top government officials will be attacked during the next few months.

¶6. (C) Al Quraishi initially issued his order reducing the PSDs for top Diyala officials on July 30, based on a memorandum from the Ministry of Interior that outlined plans to remove the police officers from the PSDs and replace them with a new, as yet unstaffed personal security organization for top government officials. The memorandum stated that PSDs would be: 20 guards for Governors, ten for Deputy Governors and five each for Assistant Governors and Provincial Council members. Implementing instructions have not yet been issued. According to Bajillan, none of the other provinces plans to implement the memorandum until the new security organization is formed and staffed.

¶7. (C) Diyala,s Governor and Provincial Council were incensed that al Quraishi issued his implementing instructions without consulting with them. They also charged that al Quraishi had exceeded his authority and taken actions that were not included in the instructions. They told us, for example, that as Quraishi had arbitrarily decided that Provincial Council members were not entitled to any PSDs.

¶8. (C) Diyala,s Provincial Council voted to go on strike on August 4 to protest al Quraishi,s actions. The strike ended the next day after Bajillan called al Quraishi and thought he had a commitment from him to suspend

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implementing the reductions until after the conclusion of operation &Benevolent Diyala.8 Provincial Council members are particularly alarmed that al Quraishi acted as he did even though the risks of terrorist activity directed against them might rise substantially because of the ongoing province-wide military campaign &Benevolent Diyala.8

¶9. (C ) COMMENT. al Quraishi,s decision was particularly ill-timed since it will essentially sideline Diyala,s political leaders, or at the very least minimize their ability to provide oversight of &Benevolent Diyala.8 and keep sectarian tensions in check. Governor Ra,ad,s call to not reduce the security details until some time after the conclusion of &Benevolent Diyala,s8 may be essential for ensuring its success. The Provincial Council vote to remove al Quraishi may force that postponement.

¶10. (C) Sources here believe that al Quraishi is supported by Bakr al Hakim, the moderate leader of SCIRI (Bader Corps), who will try to block efforts to remove him. Coalition Forces have heard that the Minister of Interior stated that the Provincial Council,s vote is irrelevant. We are not sure of who has what authority, but any such decision would probably require the Prime Minister,s approval due to its potential impact on operation &Benevolent Diyala.8 Diyala,s officials have a long list of alleged misdeeds by al Quraishi, including instances of violating the law regarding judicial proceedings; there are also unconfirmed allegations that al Quraishi was involved in sectarian atrocities last year. Ultimately, the Government of Iraq may have to decide whether it is worth risking the potentially damaging publicity that would arise were it to decide to not back the Diyala Provincial Council,s decision. END COMMENT

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